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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: STATES REPORTEDLY USING AMNESTY TO  
PREPARE FOR 2011 ELECTIONS

REF: A. LAGOS 00348  
[1](#)B. ABUJA 01278

Classified By: CONSUL GENERAL DONNA BLAIR FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Femi Falana, the personal attorney for Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) leader Henry Okah, told Poloff on August 26 that the core Niger Delta states (Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers) are pursuing their own amnesty agenda instead of cooperating with the federal government. He claimed that they are negotiating with different militant groups to build relationships in preparation for the 2011 elections. Each state government is "competing for the boys' attention" and trying to stockpile their surrendered weapons, Falana said.

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Competition for Militants in Bayelsa  
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[1](#)2. (C) As noted separately to us by Sheriff Mulade, a former militant from Tom Polo's camp, Falana said Bayelsa state remained particularly problematic, as fierce competition has arisen between Nigerian Delta Development Commission Managing Director Timi Alaide and Governor Timipre Sylva to secure their own positions in 2011 (Reftel A). According to Falana, the Governor paid Niger Delta militant Boyloaf large sums to appear to cooperate with the government, and questions have arisen regarding the quality and types of arms the militants have actually surrendered. Falana has heard rumors that junior commanders are very angry about the deal Boyloaf negotiated for himself and that young men in Bayelsa are buying cheap weapons and then surrendering them to receive the amnesty payments.

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Henry Okah Loses Ground as Mediator  
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[1](#)3. (C) Since his release on July 13, Henry Okah has met with several militant groups in the Niger Delta (Reftel B). Falana said, however, that Okah's position as mediator has been hampered because the state governments are negotiating independently with militant groups. While Okah's mandate was to encourage militants to participate in the federal amnesty program, the states have been more successful at luring them for their own purposes and taking credit for all of the alleged cooperation, thus creating tension between Okah and the governors. Falana claims that Okah's vehicle was attacked upon returning from visiting Wole Soyinka in Ogun State last week. He believes the attacks were orchestrated

by two Delta state governors, although he did not name them. Nigerian Immigration detained Okah at the airport on August 22 as he was departing for South Africa, but released him after confirming that he was permitted to leave the country. He has not set a return date, but given his diminishing influence in the amnesty process, Okah has little reason to return immediately. According to Falana, Okah is allegedly in South Africa for medical treatment.

¶4. (U) This cable has been coordinated with Embassy Abuja.  
BLAIR